
IMPROVING ENGLISH SPEAKING SKILLS THROUGH SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION

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ARTICLE

ABSTRACT

Keywords:

Speaking Skill,

Small Group

Discussion

This research is aimed at inquiring the use of small group discussions in the improvement of speaking skills studied in classroom action research (CAR). The population of the research was the eighth-grade students of SMPN 2 Curug consist of thirty students. The researchers used one class as a control group. Based the result of this study, the researchers implemented the action in two cycles; every cycle consists of planning, acting, observing and reflecting. The first is planning, the researchers identified a problem. The second is acting, the researchers collected and analysed the data. The third is observing, in this stage the researchers developed a plan to make change and implemented these changes. This cycle reflects the components of action research. It is critical to consider the impact of the changes made when reflecting. The result of this research is the mean score of students on the speaking test before carrying out the Class Action Research (CAR) is 57,5 for pretest and post-test 64,7 in the first cycle, this is the student's treatment. And in the second cycle 70,6 after using small group discussion. It means that the mean score of the post test is greater than the pre-test. Thus, this research that using small group discussion can improve students' speaking ability for the eighth-year students of SMPN 2 Curug.

INTRODUCTION

Speaking is an important skill to develop when learning English. It is almost always required in every teaching and learning process to answer questions, ask questions, lead a discussion, give a presentation, and so on. The ability of speaking to enable communication

effectively is important to a variety of communication skills. Achieving it, however, is not simple. Speaking is a form of speech delivered with the aim that it can be received and responded by an interlocutor. According to Benter Oseno Gudu (2015), speaking is defined as "creating a series of words and sentences to be communicated verbally." Speaking, on the other hand, is part of a thought process based on processing information from existing sources. As a result, it is possible to conclude that the relationship between speaking and thinking has enabled people to communicate effectively and correctly based on the intercorrelation among topics being discussed. According to Wiyudo (2016) argued that speaking is one of the keys to maintain communication related to the impacts on ways of communication, such as providing others understand what is conveyed and to be understood what is responded in a two-way communication.

Most students are not willing to speak English well when it comes to teaching and learning English as a foreign language due to communication hindrance. Due to the conditioning factors, there are internal and external factors. Internal factors come from the student themselves. The type of communication are concerns due to personality factors. The students were hesitantly to share their opinions; therefore, the students are reluctant to practise speaking. They are mostly worried when they are being mocked due to learning mistakes, such as low-motivated speaking, limited vocabulary, grammatical mistakes. This frightening language experience is much concerned with their classroom environment, social contacts, and the continuity of English teachers' support in the way of their teaching learning technique, which is critical to the success of language learning in all aspects of language education. However, the teachers mostly do not select any appropriate teaching technique for their teaching speaking. The teachers taught them by asking the students to read the conversations or dialogues in front of the class. These activities, in turn, do not allow them to express their ideas directly. As a result, students cannot improve their speaking skills during the teaching-learning process.

There have been numerous approaches to teaching speaking skills. One of them is within a small group discussion. According to Fauzi (2017), small groups are supposed to be an assisting group work to serve the encouragement, clarification, and guidance for students' active participatory academic leaning plan and social classroom activities. A teacher leads a group and elicits students to present their ideas and evidence of learning experiences. When

problems are found to be solved in, other members of the group respond and offer a solution. In small groups, they may think and find possible solutions, in which they then present the solutions to the class for a further discussion. During the small group interaction, the teacher facilitates students to work on their speaking activities and may summarize statements as well as offer alternative solutions in the session end. Based on the fact that students work on a small discussion, the objective of this study is to find out whether positive or negative effects of small group discussion in the improvement of speaking skills.

Speaking is fundamental to human communication because it is the most direct way for people to communicate with one another. In Imam Fauzi (2017), Brown, Rogers, and Rogers state that speaking skills which are actively skilled can be progressively learnable through the accuracy and effectiveness of listening skills. In other words, speaking requires the involvement at least two or more people in which they are both listening and speaking or the other way around.

According to Hadfield (1999) in Lalu Bohari (2020), he defines speaking as a knowledge medium for students between the specific environment of classroom and the societal outside of world in common. Therefore, there are three features of speaking activities to connect the classroom with the real world, such as the opportunity of speaking practices, purposeful communication, and meaningful situations. In relation to the applicable speaking practices and educational competence (Bohari, 2020), students are allowed to develop speaking capacity based spoken setting, practicality, and washback. Teachers need to plan lesson materials, for example, selected topics to be presented to students, given opportunities to do speaking practices, and provided feedback.

Based on the idea of Spratt, Pulverness, and Williams (2005), speaking involves a lot more than just using grammar and vocabulary accurately. When we speak, we are constantly thinking about the person we are speaking to and our desire to successfully communicate our meaning to them. In so doing, we employ interactive strategies, including gestures, eye contact, facial expression, and body movement to convey our core messages clearly and use language functions to clarify out meaning, ask for opinions, continue the interaction (communication).

According to Lalu Bohari (2019) interactive strategies are influenced by individual factors: (1) topical knowledge (2) motivation to speak (3) teachers' feedback during speaking activities (4) confidence (5) pressure to perform well and (6) time for preparation. Considering the factors above, speaking develops to acquire students' speaking skills-based aspects of paralinguistics such as pronunciation, structure, vocabulary, content, and fluency.

Discussions in small groups serve intellectual, emotional, and social purposes. Discussion, practically, helps participants become aware of the diversity of opinions on lecture materials in common. Participants may have a personal emotional involvement in the learning process. It is to create a logical sense of cohesion and trust with another. It helps the participants to build their inter personal skills and confidence about offering individual opinions in a small-group discussion (Melodi dael, Sela Adi Astarini, Hendra Husnussalam, 2019).

Following a content-based lesson, a discussion can be held for a variety of reasons. In their discussion groups, students may aim to reach a conclusion, share ideas about an event, or find solutions. The purpose of the discussion activity must be established by the teacher prior to the discussion. As a result, the discussion points are relevant to this purpose, and students do not waste time chatting with each other about irrelevant topics (Hayriye Kayi,2006). It is always preferable not to form large groups for efficient group discussions, because quiet students may avoid contributing in large groups. Finally, regardless of the goal of the class or group discussion, students should always be encouraged to ask questions, paraphrase ideas, express support, and seek clarification.

METHOD

This research used classroom action research. The participants of this research are the eighth-grade students of SMPN 2, Curug. There are thirty students observed and researched in one class. They are 12 boys and 18 girls. According to Argawati (Melodi Dael, Sela Adi Astarini, Hendra Husnussalam, 2019), action research refers to teacher-initiated classroom investigations that aim to increase the teacher's understanding of classroom teaching and learning and to effect change in classroom practices. The data was collected as described in appendix 1, analysed in pre-test of students' scores appendix 2, and researched in two cycles:

one and two as presented in appendix 3 and 4.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Result

In classroom action research there are two cycles. Each cycle includes planning, acting, observing, and reflecting. The first is planning, the researcher is to identify a problem. The second is acting, the researcher is collecting and analysing the data. The third is observing, in this stage the researcher develops a plan to make change and implements these changes. This is the action component of action research. It is critical to consider the impact of the changes made when reflecting. The researcher discovered a significant difference in teaching speaking ability using small group discussion based on observation, interview, and research.

Discussion

Based on the result above, at the first cycle, the students still confuse and afraid of using grammar, pronunciation in conversation. So, the researcher conducting the second cycle. In the second cycle students begin to understand and start conversations using English. There is a different score between pre-test and post-test in cycle 1 and post-test in cycle 2. In the pre-test, the mean score of students on the speaking test before carrying out the Class Action Research (CAR) is 57,5 for pre-test and post-test 64,7 in the first cycle, this is the student's treatment. And in the second cycle 70,6 after using small group discussion. It means that the mean score of the post test is greater than the pre-test. From the result of data analysis, it can be concluded that using small group discussion can improve students' speaking ability for the eighth-year students of SMPN 2 Curug.

CONCLUSION

Based on the result of the discussion, it can conclude that the small group discussion as a teaching strategy can improve the speaking ability of the students. The use of small group discussion teaching strategy gives the students a lot of benefit, such as they have much

opportunity to speak or express their ideas, increasing participants more active in the class. The English teacher should use an interesting method and technique to teach speaking ability. They can use small group discussion techniques. Students will enjoy the material. This will help improve their speaking skills.

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Appendix 1

In collecting data, it uses a speaking rubric as a standard to assessing students’ speaking ability.

THE RUBRIC OF SPEAKING ASSESMENT

1. Date :
2. Name :
3. Topic :
4. Class :

NO	Criteria	Rating scores	Descriptions
1	Pronunciation	5	Have few traces of foreign language.
		4	Always intelligible, though one is conscious of definite accent.
		3	Pronunciation problem necessities concentrated listening and occasionally lead to misunderstanding.
		2	Very hard to understand because of pronunciation problem, most frequently be asked to repeat.
		1	Pronunciation problem to serve as to make speech virtually unintelligible.
2	Grammar	5	Make few (if any) noticeable errors of grammar and word order.
		4	Occasionally makes grammatical and or word orders errors that do not, however obscure meaning.
		3	Make frequent errors of grammar and word order, which occasionally meaning.
		2	Grammar and word order errors make comprehension difficult, must often rephrases sentence.
		1	Errors in grammar and word order, so, severe as to make speech virtually unintelligible.
3	Vocabulary	5	Use of vocabulary and idioms is virtually that of native speaker.
		4	Sometimes uses inappropriate terms and must rephrases ideas because of lexical and equities.
		3	Frequently uses the wrong words conversation somewhat limited because of inadequate vocabulary.
		2	Misuse of words and very limited vocabulary makes comprehension quite difficult.
		1	Vocabulary limitation so extreme as to make conversation virtually impossible.
4	Fluency	5	Speech as fluent and efforts less as that of native speaker.

		4	Speed of speech seems to be slightly affected by language problem.
		3	Speed and fluency are rather strongly affected by language problem.
		2	Usually hesitant, often forced into silence by language limitation.
		1	Speech is so halting and fragmentary as to make conversation virtually impossible.
5	Comprehension	5	Appears to understand everything without difficulty.
		4	Understand nearly everything at normal speed although occasionally repetition may be necessary.
		3	Understand most of what is said at slower than normal speed without repetition.
		2	Has great difficulty following what is said. Can comprehend only “social conversation” spoken slowly and with frequent repetitions.
		1	Can not be said to understand even simple conversation.

Appendix 2

The table of scores are below:

Table 1. Students score in Pre-test

NO	INITIAL NAME	SCORE
1	AS	52
2	A	52
3	AR	56
4	AD	60
5	AN	60
6	AI	60
7	AZ	70
8	AA	56
9	CN	60
10	CH	54
11	DK	56
12	EK	62
13	H	56
14	JN	64
15	JK	56
16	LA	54
17	LS	56

18	MA	56
19	MK	52
20	MR	60
21	MF	56
22	MZ	52
23	MR	56
24	NS	70
25	N	58
26	NW	64
27	OF	50
28	RP	56
29	RH	60
30	RF	50
TOTAL		1724

To find out the mean score of speaking ability of students. The following formula is:

$$\underline{m} = \frac{\sum x}{N}$$

M = Mean score

$\sum x$ = Total

score

N = Total

students

$$= \frac{1724}{30} = 57,5$$

Appendix 3

Table 2. Students score in cycle I

NO	INITIAL NAME	SCORE
1	AS	62
2	A	62
3	AR	70
4	AD	64
5	AN	64
6	AI	62
7	AZ	72

8	AA	70
9	CN	72
10	CH	60
11	DK	60
12	EK	68
13	H	64
14	JN	70
15	JK	60
16	LA	58
17	LS	70
18	MA	60
19	MK	62
20	MR	64
21	MF	62
22	MZ	60
23	MR	68
24	NS	74
25	N	64
26	NW	68
27	OF	60
28	RP	62
29	RH	68
30	RF	62
TOTAL		1942

To find out the mean score of speaking ability of students. The formula is:

$$\begin{aligned}m &= \frac{\sum x}{N} \\ &= \frac{1942}{30} \\ &= 64,7\end{aligned}$$

Appendix 4

Table 3. Students score in cycle II

NO	INITIAL NAME	SCORE
1	AS	72
2	A	70
3	AR	76
4	AD	70

5	AN	70
6	AI	68
7	AZ	78
8	AA	70
9	CN	72
10	CH	70
11	DK	64
12	EK	72
13	H	70
14	JN	76
15	JK	68
16	LA	64
17	LS	76
18	MA	60
19	MK	68
20	MR	70
21	MF	70
22	MZ	64
23	MR	68
24	NS	80
25	N	80
26	NW	70
27	OF	68
28	RP	68
29	RH	76
30	RF	70
TOTAL		2118

To find out the mean score of speaking ability of students. The formula is:

$$\begin{aligned} m &= \frac{\sum x}{N} \\ &= \frac{2118}{30} \\ &= 70,6 \end{aligned}$$